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Eras Journal - Harris, D: "Defining Genocide: Defining History?"

Defining Genocide: Defining History?

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[Abstract](#)

Introduction

A heated debate on the most appropriate definition of genocide exists within the field of genocide studies. In books, journal articles, reviews and electronic sources scholars contest the relative merits of the United Nations definition versus alternative definitions, the importance of particular facets of the crime to understanding its fundamental nature, and which of the multitude of atrocities in the last century can truly be called genocide. This dialogue reflects the complex and difficult nature of the subject matter. Scholars examining genocide are attempting to comprehend the most heinous and extreme of crimes, and one that the perpetrators have often gone to great lengths to mask. An appropriate definition of genocide is a crucial tool through which to understand and interpret both specific instances of genocide and the phenomenon more generally. Yet no definition is without shortcomings or consequences. The definition of genocide has the power to influence how the history of genocide is written, and even which parts of that history are written. Furthermore, such discourse influences our response to contemporary issues surrounding genocide. This article will examine the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to understanding genocide, and the impact of these approaches on the resulting scholarship.

Defining Genocide

The term 'genocide' was coined in 1944, by Polish Jewish scholar Raphaël Lemkin, who combined the Greek *genos* (race, tribe) with the Latin *cide* (killing) to describe the horror of the Jewish experience in Hitler's Germany. In 1946, it was largely as a result of Lemkin's determined lobbying that the issue of the prevention and punishment of genocide was first addressed at the United Nations. After discussion in the General Assembly, on 11 December 1946 resolution 96-I was passed, declaring genocide to be a crime under international law, and requesting the Economic and Social Council of the UN to draw up a draft Convention. Lemkin's position as a consultant on the first draft of the Convention had considerable influence upon the proposed definition of 'genocide'. Many of his ideas, elucidated earlier in his seminal work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, found strong expression in the draft. These included the concepts of cultural genocide as the destruction of the essential foundations of life of the group, biological genocide as the prevention of births within a group, and his focus upon racial and ethnic groups as those most in need of protection.^[1] This draft was then submitted to the Economic and Social Council, where, in extensive debate, almost every point was contested. The final wording

of the definition of 'genocide' and the provisions of the Convention were achieved through debate and compromise between the member states, which is strongly reflected in the document.

On 9 December 1948, the *Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* was adopted by the General Assembly. The crime of genocide was defined as:

"any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group". [\[2\]](#)

Genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide and complicity in genocide were all declared punishable. Contracting Parties, nations ratifying the Convention, acknowledged genocide as a crime under international law, "which they undertake to prevent and to punish". [\[3\]](#) The Convention came into effect in 1951, after being ratified by the minimum of twenty nations, and it remains in effect and unmodified.

The *Genocide Convention* has provided scholars examining genocide with an internationally recognised definition with which to engage. However, as a definition designed to enable international action to address the crime, it is essentially legal in nature. It quickly became apparent that it was ill-suited for historical scholarship. Nevertheless, many genocide scholars have chosen to work with the UN definition of genocide, despite its legal construction. Those who use this definition do not deny these shortcomings, but point to its stance as an internationally recognised definition of this odious crime. [\[4\]](#) This is the definition nations acknowledge when they ratify the *Genocide Convention*, and as such is of enormous significance. If nation states choose to address the problem of genocide at any level, they will almost certainly use the UN definition.

There are, however, distinct disadvantages to using this definition. Its narrowness has meant that a number of atrocities do not 'qualify' as genocide. In particular, political groups and social classes are not included under the Convention: political groups due to the opposition of Russia and the Eastern Bloc, and social classes due to the opposition of Western European democracies. Atrocities experienced by these groups must therefore be canvassed under titles such as 'Related Atrocities' or excluded from analysis altogether. And indeed, the definition is so narrow that in 1986 the *Wall Street Journal* was able to point out that no genocide since the Holocaust had yet 'qualified' under the UN criteria. [\[5\]](#) The requirement that genocidal acts must be "committed with intent" also poses great difficulties, as intent is very difficult to prove conclusively. [\[6\]](#)

A significant number of scholars investigating genocide have proposed and/or use an alternative definition to that provided by the UN. Alternative definitions have focused on one or a combination of elements that the author/s consider most fundamental to the nature of genocide. These have included the intent of the perpetrator, the type of acts that may be considered genocidal, the nature of the victim groups, and the role of the State as perpetrator. There are many such definitions in use. A good example is that formulated by Chalk and Jonassohn in *The*

History and Sociology of Genocide. According to these authors, who focus primarily on perpetrator intent and the nature of the victim group, genocide is "A form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator".^[7] Scholars like Chalk and Jonassohn defend their use of an alternative definition on the grounds that the shortcomings of the UN definition make it untenable for historical scholarship. The use of an alternative definition overcomes these difficulties, and allows the historian to define the phenomenon of genocide more clearly and accurately.

However, such an approach is not without its own disadvantages. A plethora of alternative definitions of genocide now exist. While many are complementary, there are important differences and even contradictions between them, further complicated by distinctions drawn by some scholars between concepts such as 'biological' and 'cultural' genocide. Furthermore, a number of scholars have attempted to clarify the topic with more detailed typologies of genocide, which have been even more variable.^[8]

A third alternative has been to avoid the term altogether. Scholars have employed terms such as 'democide', 'state-sponsored mass murder', 'ethnocide', 'ethnic cleansing' and 'politicide' to describe events otherwise referred to as genocide. Many of these terms have been utilised in situations where a label of genocide is contentious, for example in describing the persecution of a political group. While this is a valid option, it is one that only a minority of scholars have preferred. Those who have preferred this option must address many of the issues faced by scholars using an alternative definition of genocide, and are often left with a term that is not as readily understood.^[9]

The result is a scholarship that has focused a great deal of energy on the issue of defining genocide. Arguably, this has limited the scope of the scholarship. What is certain, however, is the impact of a chosen definition on the resulting analysis. For scholars examining genocide, whether historians, sociologists, psychologists or anthropologists, the definition employed serves as the filter through which events are understood and interpreted. For example, a definition that only recognises particular acts as 'genocidal' may result in a history that focuses upon these events to the exclusion of others. In an area of investigation as complex as genocide studies, the definition of 'genocide' can be crucial to our understanding and analysis of events.

The choice of the most appropriate definition also has wider ramifications. As the British sociologist Anthony Giddens has argued, "theorising in social science is not about an environment which is indifferent to it, but one whose character is open to change in respect of that theorising".^[10] That is, our understanding of past events can have contemporary consequences. In an area of study where those events are as extreme and as terrible as genocide, the scholar must be particularly mindful of such ramifications. For example, a determination of a past event as 'genocide' or otherwise may influence survivors' claims for compensation, or the efforts of the international community to punish perpetrators. Perhaps even more significantly, attempts to prevent future occurrences of genocide rest upon our current understanding of the crime. A definition of genocide that provides a broader understanding may lead to more effective preventative measures.

Such consequences of genocide scholarship must be given serious attention. Two case studies, an examination of the Killing Fields of Cambodia and the experiences of Indigenous Australians in the last two centuries, highlight these potential consequences, and just how significant they can be. The pivotal role of the definition of genocide in our understanding of these histories, and our contemporary response to them, is readily apparent.

Defining History: The Cambodian Genocide

On 17 April 1975 the Khmer Rouge gained control of Cambodia. Under Pol Pot, the Cambodian people were subjected to probably the most radical political, social and economic revolution ever. [11] The Cambodian people knew only of *Angkar*, the 'organisation', as the power behind the sudden transformation of their nation. Cities were evacuated, and the whole populace was forced to labour for *Angkar*, planting, tending and harvesting rice, constructing dams and irrigation channels, and clearing land for cultivation. There were no wages, and *Angkar* distributed food, usually inadequate quantities of rice. Schools and hospitals were closed, medical care became almost non-existent, the nation's currency and markets were abolished, and religion and cultural practices were suppressed. [12] Numerous groups were targeted for persecution, and often treated as 'enemies' to be eliminated. These included former urban dwellers, the Vietnamese and Chinese minorities, the Cham Muslim people, former government/military officials and the educated classes. [13] Between April 1976 and January 1979, when the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia ended the genocide, an estimated 1.5 million Cambodians out of a population of 8 million died. Major causes of death included execution, starvation, exhaustion and lack of medical care. [14]

Historians have been instrumental in the task of investigating the atrocities that occurred in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime. The role of the definition of genocide in influencing this history has been significant. Historians using the UN definition of genocide have gone to great lengths to classify the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime between 1975 and 1979. The provisions of the UN definition, and its limitation of victim groups to "national, ethnic, racial or religious" have meant that not all victims of the Khmer Rouge can be considered victims of genocide. [15] However, researchers working in the period following the atrocities were able to gather evidence that several groups targeted by the Khmer Rouge did meet the criteria of the UN definition. These included minority Cham Muslims, Christians, Buddhist monks, and the Vietnamese and Chinese minorities. Arguably, Cambodians from the Khmer Rouge defined 'Eastern Zone' of Cambodia may also be considered victims of genocide. Historians, most notably Ben Kiernan and Gregory Stanton, worked to gather evidence not only that these groups were particularly targeted by the Pol Pot regime, but also to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the genocidal intent of the Khmer Rouge. [16] Such history is invaluable. Beyond documenting the period, this history serves to publicly declare the Killing Fields of Cambodia as genocide, placing pressure on the UN and nations that have ratified the *Genocide Convention* to respond accordingly. Such careful determinations of genocide make it ever more difficult for governments concerned with political expediency to brush aside the atrocities.

However, there are other consequences of writing history using the UN definition of genocide, which must also be considered. The way we perceive the genocide in Cambodia is clearly influenced by the UN definition. As some victims of the atrocities are included as victims of genocide and others are excluded, does that imply that there is a qualitative difference in their experiences? Is it appropriate to accept, for example, that those victims of the atrocities targeted because they were from an educated class were subject to a different phenomenon from those targeted because they were Buddhist monks? Such questions are crucial to developing a fuller understanding of the genocide. Also important to consider in developing a comprehensive understanding of events are the perceptions of the Khmer Rouge perpetrators of the genocide. Did the Khmer Rouge perceive targeting ethnic and religious groups as qualitatively distinct from targeting social classes? Equally, the perspective of the victims must be considered. It is unlikely that Cambodians perceived these different groups targeted by the Khmer Rouge as subject to different persecutory campaigns. Memoirs from survivors certainly do not make such

a differentiation. [17] Are we then imposing a Western, even Orientalist interpretation upon these events? Indeed, one could suggest that the entire attempt to understand the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge through a categorisation according to Western labels is of little relevance to Cambodians.

Using the UN definition of genocide also influences not only how, but which parts of this history are written. The quest to establish minorities within Cambodia as victims of genocide, has perhaps led to an inordinate focus on the particular experiences of these groups. Considerably more research appears to have been conducted into those groups whose experiences may 'qualify' as genocidal. This has resulted in a body of scholarship which has not focused sufficiently on the experiences of all of Cambodian society. Furthermore, a number of scholars have charged that authors such as Kiernan, in their efforts to declare the Cambodian experience 'genocide', have focused on the racial nature of the killing to the exclusion of the influence of class, education, or political beliefs. [18] This may result in a skewed understanding of the reasons victims were targeted under the Pol Pot regime.

The alternative approach to writing the history of the Cambodian genocide is to use a different definition of the word 'genocide'. Serge Thion, in an article entitled 'Genocide as a Political Commodity', argues strongly that this would lead to a more accurate conception of the genocide. Thion argues that "generally speaking, people were persecuted under the DK [Democratic Kampuchea] regime because of what they believed, or were supposed by security organs to believe, and because of family links with those suspected of harbouring wrong beliefs or thoughts detrimental to the state". [19] Furthermore, he reminds us that the greatest part of the human losses must be ascribed to the *economic* policy of the Khmer Rouge. According to Thion, the use of the UN definition of genocide in describing the atrocities in Cambodia leads to a particularly partisan, political interpretation of events, and one with which the Cambodians themselves would not identify. An alternative approach would allow a more inclusive history of the Killing Fields of Cambodia to be written. Victims of the Khmer Rouge were targeted for a number of reasons, and each of these reasons, and their combination, must be explored fully. A definition of genocide that facilitates such exploration will lead to a better understanding of events than one that restricts it.

Nevertheless, there may be some negative consequences to divorcing the history of the Cambodian atrocities from the UN legal definition of genocide. Since the time of the Killing Fields, efforts to bring the Khmer Rouge leadership to justice have been slow and inadequate. In this time, historical scholarship on the atrocities has been a strong source of pressure calling for the punishment of the crime of genocide under the *Genocide Convention*. Removing this pressure would not only decrease the focus on an appropriate response to this heinous crime, but may also influence the perception of public pressure in responding to future genocides.

Defining History: Indigenous-Settler Relations in Australia

The definition of genocide has also been of great significance to the discussion around the Stolen Generations in Australia in recent times. [20] The 'Stolen Generations' is a term that refers to the victims of Australia's former policy of forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their families and communities. [21] This was a systematic policy of State, Territory and Federal governments, with the aim of assimilating Aboriginal children into Anglo-Australian culture. Children, at a very young age, were routinely removed from their parents, and placed in institutions, or fostered or adopted into white families. Parents were disallowed contact with their children, and in most cases had no legal recourse. [22] This policy spanned 150 years of Australia's history, and was pursued until the late 1960s. The proportion of Aboriginal children

subjected to removal is estimated at between one in three and one in ten. The consequences of this policy to Indigenous Australians have included broken families, loss of language, culture and connection to traditional lands, fractured communities and a negative impact on physical and mental health. [23] The term 'Stolen Generations', first used by Australian historian Peter Read, reflects not only the forcible nature of the removal, but some of the anguish that resulted from this policy. [24]

In 1997, *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, examined the issue of genocide and the Stolen Generations. Using the UN definition of genocide, the report concluded that the events under question did, in fact, constitute genocide. In light of this conclusion, it is perhaps surprising that 'genocide' is a word used rarely, and only very recently, in describing the history of Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian relations. As Colin Tatz describes so aptly, "Almost all historians of the Aboriginal experience - black and white - avoid it. They write about pacifying, killing, cleansing, excluding, exterminating, starving, poisoning, shooting, beheading, sterilising, exiling, removing - but avoid genocide". [25] Perhaps one explanation for the reluctance to use the term 'genocide' in describing indigenous-Settler relations can be traced back to the nature of the UN definition. In this legal definition, genocide is described as one or more of a number of acts. This effectively equates the act of "Killing members of the group" with "Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group", an equation which invites direct comparison of events as disparate as the experiences of the Stolen Generations with those of the Jews in Nazi Germany. [26] Few historians are comfortable with this type of analysis. [27]

However it is understandable that even historians who give little import to such concerns may hesitate to use the word 'genocide' in describing the experiences of the Stolen Generations. It is extraordinary to suggest that while the experiences of the Stolen Generations are considered genocide under the UN definition, the decimation of ninety per cent of Indigenous Australians between 1788 and 1900, may not 'qualify'. [28] As Tony Barta elucidates in 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonisation of Australia', "It [the term genocide] has succeeded in devaluing all other concepts of less planned destruction, even if the effects are the same. To be *really* terrible, an ordeal inflicted on a people now has to be 'genocidal'". Barta believes "If they [historians] have not spoken of genocide - the word appears very rarely - it is for reasons of definition which have made the concept inadequate in a case crying out for its use". [29] One can understand the historian's reluctance to use the term genocide in describing the experience of the Stolen Generations if in doing so there may be an implicit devaluation of the earlier decimation of the Indigenous Australian population.

Nevertheless, the historian must consider the ramifications of excluding the term 'genocide' from such discourse. Such an omission may serve to devalue the experiences of the Stolen Generations, particularly given the conclusions presented in *Bringing Them Home*. Admittedly, thus far there have been fairly negative political consequences to this classification of the Stolen Generations. The political response has been to reject and discount this conclusion, and use this polemic to avoid seriously considering a plethora of related historical and Indigenous issues. Indeed, the role of this political response in influencing the use or omission of the term 'genocide' from discussion surrounding the Stolen Generations can be a powerful force itself. [30] However, as the political discussion on this issue continues, and particularly as it encompasses issues of a possible treaty and reparations, it may become a far more useful category for conceptualising the history of the Stolen Generations. Historians working in this area must consider not only immediate but more long term consequences of their history.

A small number of scholars have chosen to use the term 'genocide' in their discussion of Settler-Indigenous relations in Australia. Colin Tatz has analysed the Indigenous Australian experience in light of the UN definition of genocide. He believes Australia may be guilty of multiple acts of genocide:

Australia is guilty of at least three ... acts of genocide: first, the essentially private genocide, the physical killing committed by settlers and rogue police officers in the nineteenth century, while the state, in the form of the colonial authorities, stood silently by (for the most part); second, the twentieth century official state policy and practice of forcibly transferring children from one group to another with the express intention that *they cease being Aboriginal*; third, the twentieth century attempts to achieve the biological disappearance of those deemed 'half-caste' Aborigines. [\[31\]](#)

Tatz highlights that not only genocide, but also "complicity in genocide", is punishable under the Articles of the *Genocide Convention* - a provision almost invariably overlooked. [\[32\]](#) Furthermore, he also explores a very interesting issue surrounding the definitional problems associated with the requirement of "intent to destroy, in whole or in part" in the UN definition. [\[33\]](#) The definition does not rule out, either implicitly or explicitly, intent with *bona fides*, good faith, "for their own good". It may therefore be possible to conclude that the ultimate purpose of the crime is irrelevant, as long as intentional destruction of a protected group takes place.

There is also a recognisable trend towards using an alternative definition of genocide when using this term to describe Settler-Indigenous relations. Tony Barta argues strongly for a different definition of genocide to that provided by the UN. Barta believes that it would be more useful to develop a conception of genocide which focuses upon relations of destruction, and without the current emphasis on the policies and intentions which brought it in to being. [\[34\]](#) Alison Palmer argues that nineteenth century Queensland witnessed a distinctive form of genocide between 1840 and 1897. While she believes "The structure and resources of the Queensland government were so limited during this period that any plan to systematically annihilate the Aborigines would have failed", this does not prevent her from referring to the events in Colonial Queensland as a case of genocide. [\[35\]](#) However, intent to destroy a group is required by the UN definition for an atrocity to be considered genocide. Palmer justifies her choice of terminology with the contention that it is only through examining colonial genocides, atrocities which mostly do not fit the narrow UN definition, that we can develop a richer definition of genocide and a clearer understanding of genocides more generally. [\[36\]](#)

Clearly, there are very significant potential consequences associated with the choice of terminology by the scholar in the field of Settler-Indigenous relations. The use of the UN definition of genocide has the advantage of keeping the issue firmly on the Australian political agenda. However, an alternative definition of genocide, without the restrictions of the UN definition, may lead to a more comprehensive history of the Indigenous experience of dispossession, murder and removal in the last two centuries.

Conclusion

Defining genocide has been a contentious task for historians. The ongoing and often passionate debate surrounding the most appropriate definition is a reflection of its power to influence and shape the resulting scholarship. Indeed, we have seen how differing conceptions of genocide have led historians of both the Cambodian and Australian genocides to focus on very different facets and interpretations of events. While some of these have been complementary, for others the interpretation differs so widely as to be highly conflicting. In light of these findings, the

important question to be considered is 'Which definition leads to better history?' That is, which definition most facilitates a fuller recording of events, and a broader understanding of the meaning of these events?

I believe the answer lies in a more inclusive definition of genocide. Few would argue with the proposition that genocide is a complex, extreme event. Yet most definitions are relatively narrow, asserting a small number of descriptors as fundamental for an atrocity to be 'genocide', and then insisting that all such criteria must be met for the event to 'qualify'. This focus diverts the scholar's attention from developing a comprehensive examination of genocide. In addition, events that appear to be of a similar nature, but do not meet these rigorous criteria, are excluded from our understanding of genocide. A more inclusive definition would encourage more comprehensive explorations of genocidal events, as scholars seek to discover the range of mechanisms involved in particular occurrences. Furthermore, the inclusion of atrocities not currently reckoned as genocide would increase our understanding of the phenomenon more generally, leading to a richer concept of genocide.

A more inclusive conception might accept only one or two criteria as essential for a definition of genocide, such as a targeted victim group and some type of genocidal process. Other facets of the crime, such as perpetrator intent, the role of the State and so forth could be recognised as likely to play a role, but not essential. As noted earlier, Chalk and Jonassohn's definition of genocide, as "a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator"[\[37\]](#) is a good example of an alternative conception of genocide. However, it requires that perpetrator intent be provable. A broader definition might read "A form of one-sided mass killing in which a state and/or other authority/ies target a specific victim group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator". This would allow the inclusion of atrocities in which perpetrator intent is problematic, or in which perpetrators only partially fulfilled their genocidal aims. It would also encompass instances where the organisation of genocidal acts was decentralised. Such a definition would include, for example, colonial settlers killing Indigenous inhabitants, while colonial authorities ignored or were complicit in the killings. Israel Charny, a noted Holocaust scholar, extends this argument still further. Charny believes that all mass killing should be regarded as genocide, with cases being classified in different subgroups according to their characteristics.[\[38\]](#)

The definition proposed above limits our understanding of genocide to instances of mass killing. However, there are other types of destruction of a group that may also be considered genocide. Indeed, the UN definition acknowledges that causing serious harm to members of a group, imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group and forcible transfer of children of a group to another group may all be considered genocidal acts.[\[39\]](#) To encompass acts such as these, where clearly the aim is one of destroying a victim group but where mass killing may not be involved, I believe a broader definition is required. I suggest the following definition may be most appropriate". Genocide is a one-sided attempt by a state or other authority/ies to destroy a specific victim group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator". I believe the goal of the destruction of a victim group lies at the core of our understanding of genocide; the means of destruction, whether they be mass killing or forced assimilation, are designed to meet this goal. Therefore I believe that a definition that focuses upon this fundamental aspect of genocide, and does not preclude from consideration any atrocities in which this aspect is present, will lead to the most comprehensive understanding of genocide.

We have also seen the influence that genocide scholarship can have on contemporary events, and how significant that impact can be. I believe that the responsible historian must always be

mindful of these potential consequences. While the *Genocide Convention* remains in effect, there is a strong argument for considering atrocities also in light of the UN definition of genocide. Only thus can the perpetrators of genocide be held responsible for their actions under international law. An examination of an event utilising both the UN definition and a more inclusive definition may be ideal in this circumstance, resulting in a comprehensive history and ensuring there will not be negative contemporary consequences.

Ultimately, however, I believe that a more inclusive definition of genocide will result in a scholarship with the most positive future ramifications. Scholars, activists and even governments that address the question of preventing genocide rely on a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the crime to do so; historians and other scholars provide the bulk of this information. An historical scholarship that can provide a comprehensive, balanced understanding of the crime of genocide will provide the basis upon which the most effective preventative measures can be implemented.

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Endnotes:

[1] Raphaël Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1944, pp. 79-95. [Back](#)

[2] *Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Hereafter *Genocide Convention*), United Nations, 1948. [Back](#)

[3] *Genocide Convention*, Article I. [Back](#)

[4] For example Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981; and David Hawk, 'Pol Pot's Cambodia: Was it Genocide?' in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Towards the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1984. [Back](#)

[5] *Wall Street Journal*, February 24, 1986, p. 12. [Back](#)

[6] *Genocide Convention*. [Back](#)

[7] Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (eds.), *History and Sociology of Genocide*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1991, p. 23. [Back](#)

[8] For example, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (eds.), *History and Sociology of Genocide*; Irving Horowitz, *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1980; Vahakn Dadrian, 'A Typology of Genocide', *International Review of Modern Sociology*, Vol. 5, 1975, pp. 201-212; and Helen Fein, 'Scenarios of Genocide: Models of Genocide and Critical Responses', in Israel Charny (ed.), *Towards the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1984. [Back](#)

[9] For example, R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1994; and Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr, 'Toward an Empirical Theory of Genocides and Politicides: Identification and Measurement of Cases since 1945', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, pp. 357-371. [Back](#)

[10] Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 198. [Back](#)

[11] Ben Kiernan, 'Pol Pot and Enver Pasha: A Comparison of the Cambodian and Armenian Genocides', in Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian (eds), *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, MacMillan Press, London, 1999, p. 165. [Back](#)

[12] Information on general conditions of life during the Pol Pot regime was taken from Pin Yathay, *Stay Alive, My Son*, The Free Press, New York, 1987; Haing Ngor, *A Cambodian Odyssey*, MacMillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987; Molyda Szymusiak, *The Stones Cry Out*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1986; Joan D. Criddle and Teeda Butt Mam, *To Destroy You is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family*, The Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 1987; and David R. Hawk, *The International Conference on Kampuchea*, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Bangkok, 1981. [Back](#)

[13] Ben Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide - 1975-1979', in Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny (eds), *Century of Genocide*, Garland Publishing, New York, 1997, pp. 340-343. [Back](#)

[14] Ben Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide: Issues and Responses', in George Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1994, p. 191. [Back](#)

[15] *Genocide Convention*. [Back](#)

[16] Ben Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide: Issues and Responses', pp. 197 - 202. Also Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996. [Back](#)

[17] For example, Pin Yathay, *Stay Alive, My Son*; Haing Ngor, *A Cambodian Odyssey*; Molyda Szymusiak, *The Stones Cry Out*; and Joan D. Criddle and Teeda Butt Mam, *To Destroy You is No Loss*. [Back](#)

[18] Kenton J. Clymer, 'The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 59, Issue 1, 1997, pp. 186-189. [Back](#)

[19] Serge Thion, 'Genocide as a Political Commodity', in Ben Kiernan (ed.), *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1993, p. 172. [Back](#)

[20] The author acknowledges that the term 'Stolen Generations' is contentious, and its use is a political statement. [Back](#)

[21] Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul so Profound: The Return of the Stolen Generations*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, p. xi. [Back](#)

[22] Where legal recourse was possible, Indigenous parents generally had little knowledge of the legal system, and extremely limited access. [Back](#)

[23] Information for this section is taken from Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul so Profound*; and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, April 1997. [Back](#)

[24] Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul so Profound*. [Back](#)

[25] Colin Tatz, *Genocide in Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 1999, p. 2. [Back](#)

[26] *Genocide Convention*. [Back](#)

[27] Most scholars recognise categories or typologies of genocide, and generally will only directly compare genocides that share numerous characteristics. I have never yet found a serious study directly comparing the Stolen Generations with the Holocaust. [Back](#)

[28] Bain Attwood, 'The Burden of the Past in the Present', in Michelle Grattan (ed.), *Reconciliation: Essays on Australian Reconciliation*, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2000, p. 258. [Back](#)

[29] Tony Barta, 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonisation of Australia', in Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski (eds), *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1987, p. 238. [Back](#)

[30] For a discussion on the power of government to dictate the terms of reference, see David Stannard, 'Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship', in Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed.) *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1996, particularly pp. 165-167. In this article Stannard discusses the role of the United States government in preventing the word 'genocide' from appearing in discourse around the destruction of Indigenous American peoples. [Back](#)

[31] Colin Tatz, *Genocide in Australia*, p. 6. [Back](#)

[32] *Genocide Convention*, Article III. [Back](#)

[33] *Genocide Convention*. [Back](#)

[34] Tony Barta, 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonisation of Australia'. [Back](#)

[35] Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, Crawford House Publishing, Adelaide, 2000, p. 58. [Back](#)

[36] Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, pp. 38, 48. [Back](#)

[37] Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (eds), *History and Sociology of Genocide*, p. 23. [Back](#)

[38] Israel Charny, 'Toward a Generic Definition of Genocide', in George Andreopoulos, *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, pp. 64-94. [Back](#)

[39] *Genocide Convention*. [Back](#)

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